

**Whereas**, we are part of a connectional church which seeks to spread into the entire United States of America; and

**Whereas**, questionable worship practices have apparently been introduced into various mission works under the sponsorship of the denominational Mission to North America (MNA) Committee, including the use of alternative rock music and film clips from secular movies; and

**Whereas**, at least one of the reasons why our denomination was formed in 1973 out of the Southern Presbyterian Church is because of the experimental worship that was being sponsored by the Southern Presbyterian home missions board; and

**Whereas**, the continuation of such worship practices in our mission works threatens denominational unity and is offensive to many in the church who contribute benevolence dollars to the MNA Committee; and

**Whereas**, Northern California Presbytery has overtured the General Assembly to expand its bounds to include most of Nevada and all of Utah so that no other presbytery could plant churches in that area; and

**Whereas**, this expansion of territory could have a detrimental effect on the efforts by the church as a whole in the planting of traditional churches in that vast area; and

**Whereas**, one of our sister presbyteries, Central Georgia, has adopted two overtures with regard to these matters;

**Now Therefore be it resolved**, that Grace Presbytery hereby expresses its sympathy with and support for the overtures from Central Georgia and urges the 26<sup>th</sup> Presbyterian Church in America General Assembly to adopt them.

Adopted by the Presbytery of Grace in its 91<sup>st</sup> Stated Meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> of May, 1998. Attested by: /s/ Eugene C. Case, Stated Clerk

- 17 That the following MNA-GA Permanent Committee response adopted at the June 1, 1998 meeting be approved as the answer to the request from the 25<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. *Adopted*

#### RE: Guidelines for Dividing Presbyteries

That in answer to the request from the 25<sup>th</sup> GA that MNA/GA work together with the Stated Clerk's office to define a process for dividing or creating new presbyteries which would include the presbyteries and the churches that will be affected by the change in boundaries (M25GA, 25-34, III, 11, p.162), proposed Guidelines for Dividing Presbyteries were presented to the MNA Committee at its October 1997 meeting. The Guidelines were adopted and presented to the Stated Clerk's office. See Attachment H which follows

#### Guidelines for Dividing Presbyteries

As presbyteries grow in the number of congregations and membership they include, there may come a time at which division of the presbytery may be

P. 180

helpful. Presbyteries should take care that they do not divide prematurely, causing one or more of the resulting presbyteries to lack the resources necessary for their future growth. On the other hand, a presbytery may become so large that it cannot give adequate attention to the needs of the churches and ministers within its own membership, and may find even its efforts at church planting and other growth in ministry difficult.

The 16th General Assembly (1988) established guidelines for the division of presbyteries, presented below unchanged. These guidelines are sufficient in addressing most situations.

Special care should be taken to ensure that the division of a presbytery is not made in haste or without adequate consideration of the needs of all parties involved. Therefore, at the very earliest stages of discussion of a possible division, those initiating the discussion: (a) should take care to ensure that all churches and teaching elders (including missionaries and other out of bounds members) who will possibly be affected are fully informed of the discussion as early as possible; (b) should communicate with the stated clerk of the presbytery, who in turn should communicate with the entire presbytery; (c) should be encouraged to contact General Assembly Mission to North America and the General Assembly Stated Clerk very early in the process as well, for any assistance they may be able to offer in making a smooth transition and in giving advice that may be helpful to the planning process; and (d) should target the first meeting of a presbytery in the summer or fall of the year so that they may be able to fully participate in the nominating process of General Assembly without undue delay.

(Following are Guidelines taken from the M16GA 1988, p.143, 16-63, III, 16-17.)

- (1) A presbytery should have a radius of 2 1/2 hours maximum driving distance
- (2) A presbytery should have a minimum of 10 churches.
- (3) A presbytery should have a total communicant membership of at least 1000
- (4) Presbytery boundaries should not partition metropolitan areas.
- (5) A presbytery should have regional cohesiveness.
- (6) A presbytery should have at least 3 churches each having a membership of at least 125 communicant members
- (7) Presbytery boundaries should be such that its member churches have a potential for shared ministries.
- (8) Presbytery boundaries should be such that its member churches have a common commitment to the region within the boundaries and sense their shared responsibility to cover the region with the Gospel.

P. 181

*26th General Assembly*  
MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(9) When a presbytery reaches 30 churches, it should consider whether subdivision would lead to more effective ministry

**Reasons:**

- (i) It is often to the advantage of very large presbyteries to subdivide for more efficient oversight and closer cooperation.
- (ii) Additional presbyteries are urgently needed in most of the United States, other than the South, and in Canada in order to make the Presbyterian system of government operate efficiently. A presbytery in an area where the PCA is not particularly strong could be viable with as few as ten churches, and even with less. (The first presbytery in this land had but seven.)

(10) A presbytery should limit its boundaries to that geographic area for which it is able to take meaningful responsibility for evangelism and church development

**Reason:** *M12GA*, 12-67, 111,8

- (11) We acknowledge the existence of language presbyteries
- (12) We recognize the "ideal nature of guidelines such as these and understand that several existing presbyteries do not presently meet all of them.

Approved by the MNA Committee  
Oct 97

18. That **Communication #9** from Northern California Presbytery concerning the appropriateness of **Overture 17** from Central Georgia Presbytery be received as information *Adopted*

**COMMUNICATION 9 From Northern California Presbytery**  
"A Written Point of Order to the Appropriateness of Overture 17 of Central Georgia Presbytery"

It was moved, seconded and passed at the Northern California Presbytery's called meeting of June 6, 1998, to send this written objection to Central Georgia's Overture 17 on grounds that it is out of order.

The gravamen of Overture 17 is complaining about the work of the court of the church and is an allegation of offenses directed towards a Presbytery. Such matters need to be handled under the appropriate Rules Of Discipline of our *BCO* [43-1, 43-2, 34-1]. Additionally, the use of an Overture to complain of actions of courts or persons is in violation of Scriptural principles such as Matthew 18.

*P. 182*

JOURNAL

Adopted at the Called Meeting of Northern California Presbytery on June 6, 1998.  
Attested by: /s/ Arthur R. Schick, Stated Clerk

[Stated Clerk's NOTE: This communication would also apply to Overture 28 PRG]

19. That the following Committee Minutes be approved without exception or notation: *Adopted*  
June 10, 1997 and March 19-20, 1998

And that the Committee Minutes of October 2-3, 1997 be approved with the following exceptions: *Adopted*

- 10-97-02 The Committee should have noted that the Minutes of March 6, 1997 were approved "AS AMENDED."
- 10-97-22 The representative to the GA Committee on Administration was designated after GA in violation of RAO 5-1. The person designated was also an alternate rather than a member of the Committee.

**Commissioners Present:  
Presbytery**

- Ascension
- Calvary
- Central Carolina
- Covenant
- Evangel
- Fellowship
- Grace
- Gulf Coast
- Heartland
- Illiana
- Missouri
- Nashville
- New River
- North Georgia
- Northeast
- Northern Illinois
- Pacific
- Pacific Northwest
- Palmetto
- Philadelphia
- Potomac
- Southeast Alabama
- Southeast Louisiana
- Southwest
- Susquehanna Valley
- Tennessee Valley

**Commissioner**

- TE Scott Wright
- RE David Wilcox
- TE Ken Cross
- TE Brian Habig
- RE Jack Totherow
- TE Richard C. Lambert
- TE Steven B. Shuman, secretary
- RE William M. Harris, IV
- TE Todd Bowen
- TE Brian DeJong
- RE Charles Waldron
- RE Robert K. Holt
- TE David Currence
- TE Kennedy Smartt
- TE Steve Gonzales
- TE Christopher Vogel
- TE J. Philip Clark
- TE Craig Branson
- RE David V. Massey
- RE Dale W. McLane
- RE Richard R. Larson
- RE Daren S. Dietmeier
- TE Keith Garehan
- TE Peter R. Vaughn
- TE W. Christopher Labs
- RE Fred Schumpert, chairman